



The Ram and Ewe

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Cuban Relations

The flight from Toronto to Cuba was by and large uneventful. However, landing in Havana and going through the various authorities one had the sense that laughter or frivolity was out of the question. Cuban officials are very serious about their job and one had the distinct feeling that they viewed every tourist as a potential US invasion.

As we inched our way towards Passport Control we struck up a casual conversation with the imperious matron in front of us. Surprisingly she was from the US but had been granted a special US visa to visit due to the fact that she was a Baptist missionary. She informed us that Cubans were mostly Protestants and there were in fact only a few Catholics. Furthermore, when we asked her if there were any interesting churches or cathedrals to visit we were informed that there was a cathedral in Havana and apart from that very little in that department to see. Now 'Mother Theresa' was not your usual humble missionary and if the zealous authorities ahead of us did not suspect a CIA spook then they were in desperate need of re-training.

Cuba needs tourist money to uphold their devastated economy and they have turned it into a fiasco industry. To begin with they do not accept travelers cheques or any credit cards originating in the US. You have to arrive at the airport with a wad of Canadian cash which is then converted to Cuban Tourist Dollars which are worth over one hundred times the Cubans real domestic currency. A bottle of rum would cost seven Tourist Dollars whilst the locals would pay seven Domestic Dollars. This applied to all goods and services. Now the Cubans are paid very little and the only way they can get a little ahead is by trying to get hold of some of those fabulously valuable Tourist Dollar. The real wage between a medical doctor and a bartender is about the same. The bartender, however, earns an astronomical wage compared to the doctor due to tipping and all the little deals he has going on the side. Hence every Cuban with access to tourists has developed some sort of scam industry to survive. We even met a doctor who did massages as a side line

in order to augment her income. Having researched Cuba as a holiday resort we were aware that this would occur and we prepared to fend off the scam artists.

We arrived at the Hotel Sevilla in the old part of Havana which was elegant and had somewhat of a notorious reputation of having accommodated Al Capone and his gang. The view from our seven floor window overlooked the drabest and most derelict scene I have ever witnessed in my life. The buildings were grey from lack of paint and crumbling into rubble. Yet behind all that decay was the historic architecture of a beautiful sixteenth century city. We could not wait to explore the old city with its narrow streets and fascinating buildings.

The early evening was warm with a delicious breeze making it most enjoyable and furthermore, with the promise of the sun not setting for another two and half hours, we were ready to explore. With cameras, shorts, hiking boots, sunglasses, silly hats, travel book, map and Sue fiercely clutching the bag that contained all our passports and a considerable amount of spending cash, we might have just passed for tourists. Our man was waiting for us.

We were standing in a large plaza in front of an Art Museum trying to figure from the map in the guide book where we were, when a friendly young man in his early thirties very cordially greeted us. He was attached to a rickety pushchair in which there sat an adorable baby with big eyes and beautiful eye-lashes gurgling away. Not sure if we were headed in the right direction for the Catedral de La Habana I asked the young man if the narrow lane ahead would lead us there. He was very agreeable and spoke excellent English and engaged us into some small talk. Having ascertained that we were from Canada he became very excited and pointed to the little girl and said she was also Canadian and her mother was from Chacoutami in Quebec. What a coincidence that he should be talking to two lovely people from her mother's homeland. Where were staying? Had we tried a Mojito? If not we should avoid drinking one at the hotel because they charged the tourist too much.

The bait. "Come with me my friends, I

Saturday Evening Fine Dining Menu September

Duck Rillet
With Port Wine Jelly and Melba Toast

Chicken, Mango and Coconut Soup

Mushrooms and Prawns
in a crepe

Passion Fruit Sorbet

Entrée choice of
Rolled Loin of Lamb
Stuffed with Wild Mushrooms
Prime Rib

Or
Atlantic Salmon
With a Wine reduction sauce

Selection of Baby Garden Vegetables

Crème Brulee
Coffee

\$60 per person
Does not include GST or Service/Gratuity

LADIES NIGHT

Buffet Dinner, Fashion Show
and Guest Speaker

3rd November 2006

Cocktails 6pm. Dinner served 7.30pm

\$25 per person Reservations Essential

Does not include GST or Service/Gratuity

Let us do your
PRIVATE FUNCTION
OR
CHRISTMAS PARTY

SHEEP MANURE

Dress your Fall garden with Sheep Manure ready for the spring and have a few bags in the potting shed for a great mix with potting soil. Phone first to make sure that bags are available or that there is a tractor operator if you are buying by the truck load.

Price is \$5 per bag
6 bags for \$25

will take you to a bar that is for the people. No tourists. Very good price." So off we trundle behind 'Tony' who leads us down narrow, squalid little streets with open sewer drains and people sitting apathetically in doorways. Tony insists on staying a little ahead of us so that he won't be noticed by the police who frown upon fraternization between tourist and the locals. We arrive at the 'bar of the people'. No frills and certainly full of people and none of them looked remotely like tourists. The ambience and the less than delicate aroma of unwashed bodies, alcohol and sewer was quite palpable.

Sue was in a complete dither. She was definitely not at the Country Club and feeling very threatened by the hostility of the area. The bag was clutched in both arms tight against her bosom and in French, Zulu and Afrikaans she was trying to impress upon me that we had to get out of here. Tony meanwhile had lost the baby. How he did it we still don't know because he was never out of sight. One moment he had the baby and the next it was gone. When we asked him about the disappearance he said he had given it to his mother who did not approve of her grandchild going to the bar. Later in the safety of our hotel room we deduced that the baby had been passed like a relay baton in one of those open doorways to the next scam artist.

I bought a Mojito for Tony and I. Sue had a pop with some old mint leaves in it. The price was sixteen Tourist Dollars for the three drinks and I made a mental note that I would not be indulging too often in the local cocktail. I am sure that the bartender was a little more generous with the alcohol in Tony's glass because on leaving the seedy bar he became decidedly more affable and a little Maudling. It was then that he dropped the bombshell. He flung his arms around Sue and informed her that she was his mother. "Mother! You are like my mother and I shall call you mother." I wish I had managed to catch that precious moment on camera when, as he said the last Mother bit, he placed his cheek lovingly against hers. Sue's eyes were literally popping out of her head and her mouth was moving soundlessly. I was rather relieved that she had lost the use of her vocal chords because by the bit of lip reading I can do I don't think her son would have been impressed by the soundless profanities she was mouthing. Before the situation could deteriorate I suggested to Tony that we should get to the Cathedral.

We soon arrived in a plaza with lots of tourists and Tony busied himself pointing out all the attractions. Sue was now only clutching the bag with one arm and had latched herself on to me just in case her son should favour that position. Tony seemed to be a very popular fellow and was greeted by a fair number of locals. For some reason his caution with

Shopping Notes

Christmas

EXTRA SHOPPING HOURS

We will be open in December on Friday nights for shopping till 8 pm.

ALSO

December Mondays -11 am to 4pm

The restaurant will not be open on these Mondays

OTHER LOCATIONS

NEW

Northhill Shopping Mall

Mid Oct., Nov. and Dec.

Please Note we will be located close to Sears store in temporary store. (Not an Island kiosk.)

Also

AG TRADE RED DEER

8th to 11th November

And do not forget

Spruce Meadows

Christmas Market Weekends

Nov.17th,18th &19th

Nov. 24th, 25th & 26th

And of course

CHRISTMAS WEEKEND MAGIC

PaSu Farm

Years ago before we had a shop we used to have an OPEN HOUSE at the farm on the weekend. During the weekends in Dec. We continue this tradition by offering FREE Christmas cake and hot cider. Let us take the stress out of your shopping.

THREE WEEKENDS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

OUTSTANDING SELECTION OF NEW MERCHANDISE

the local constabulary had evaporated because he was quite happy to walk shoulder to shoulder with us.

Eventually we came to the harbour entrance as the sun was setting. It gets dark quickly and this certainly added to Sue's anxiety and she began to speak in tongues again. Tony, not understanding but sensing Sue's anxiety would result in the possible loss of the two fish he had hooked, gave an impassioned performance deserving of the Cuban equivalent of an Oscar for Scam Artists. "Mother! Father!"

(This is the first time I had been included as the sire of this unlikely progeny and I was not quite comfortable with it.) "Please let me take you to a restaurant and save you a lot of money." Sue, abandoned the foreign languages and used polite English words that translated into, "Get me back to the hotel or you are dead." By now we had moved to a taxi rank that consisted of regular vehicles and this hybrid scooter crossed with a big ball. Tony had convinced me that he knew where there was an amazing little restaurant that only the top government officials went to and the langoustine was the very best. Hook set!

Off we went in this outlandish vehicle. The three of us were crammed in the back seat of this contraption with open sides. The winding route was along the harbour front and there were no street lights. It seemed as if we were going deeper into no-mans-land. Sue sat in the middle and had resumed the double arm clutch and was now muttering in tongues that if she got out of this alive mine would not be worth much.

At last we arrived at a plain looking eating establishment. Tony asked for three dollars to pay the driver. They palavered a while probably arguing how they should divide the money. With the exception of two German tourists and their guide, the restaurant was empty. The food was awful. The service was condescending and my wallet seventy dollars lighter. Tony started making all sorts of excuses about how the place had changed since he had last been here.

Fortunately we did get back to the hotel. Sue was so relieved that we were still alive that she forgot all the dire threats she had muttered. On the way up to the room we stopped at the hotel bistro for a night cap and I thought I would try a Mojito again. The price was right. Only two dollars and Tony was definitely an orphan.

WHATS NEW FOR CHRISTMAS

Ladies and Men's Sheepskin coats
Men's super soft Leather jackets
Warm fashionable sweaters.
Elegant Jackets.

From Inner Mongolia
Cashmere and cashmere wool blends
Scarves
Shawls
Blankets

From China
Pure silk duvets for an extra light
comfortable sleep

We have greatly expanded our Spa Line.
For Christmas we have added many new
and exciting products to this department.

PaSu has selected new and exciting gifts
for everyone. Visit our shop.

African Feast

with

David Thiaw and Domba

An extravagant selection of wonderful
African Food, followed by Music,
Stories and Dancing.

Saturday Oct. 21st 2006

Cocktails at 6 pm Dinner at 7.15 pm

Reservations Essential & Ticket Purchase

Tickets are \$68 per person

GST & Service included on meal and entertainment.

This is a pre-ticketed event.

Booking essential. All sales final.

RESTAURANT EVENTS

CHRISTMAS DINNER THEATRES

Saturdays

2nd, 9th & 16th December 2006

Cocktails from 6pm

Dinner served at 7.30pm

Shadow Productions

Present

A CHRISTMAS

MURDER MYSTERY

PaSu Farm presents an interactive murder mystery dinner theatre with Shadow Productions. You play detective as a hysterical whodunit is served up along with fine food. Keep your eyes peeled, ask the tough questions and be ready to laugh until your sides split. You might even win a prize.

Tickets are \$70.00

GST & Service included.

This is a pre-ticketed event.

Booking essential. All sales final.



Victo- rian Christ- mas Din- ners

Fri.24 & Sat.25th Nov.

Fri. 1st, 8th & 15th Dec.

6.00pm Cocktails 7.00pm Dinner

Once again we will be presenting our seven course, plate service English Victorian Christmas Dinner. The entrée will be a choice between Roast leg of Lamb and Prime Rib. To create a warm hospitable atmosphere our staff will be dressed in Victorian garb, candles and crackers will be placed on the table and the plum pudding will be flamed for all to see.

\$70 per person